

WARNING!

I'm aiming a shot glass right at the wobbly

logic of Alcoholics Anonymous

with their bloodshot question:

"do you ever NEED a drink?"

To them, dependence is weakness.

Well, here's a few things I rely on:

the commode and my bowels, this typewriter;

eyes, hair, and disc brakes. California Edison,

the Lakers, cheese and wine, also Marlon Brando.

Not to mention sex.

What AA really means is

if it feels good, it's bad;

pleasure's out, denial's in.

However, before we all take the bridge

remember the grandfather in The Rievers! He never

threw off the covers until he downed three fingers

of sour mash. Of course, he only grew old and wise.

Then there was Elizabeth Taylor, spoiled and filthy rich

in Heartbreak in E Flat, offering up champagne

in orange juice hors d'oeuvre with her soft porcelain body

for brunch. Should her hungry violinist have said "nay"?

Here's some other examples:

Sunday I slept til the kickoff, flicked on the Rams

for breakfast, munched a salami on rye

with hot mustard. If that doesn't call for a beer

let me slip my arms into the backward jacket.

And how about the guy on the 12-8?

If he has a snort after work

he's doing dangerous boozing in the morning.

But if he takes an AA-sanctioned evening belt,

he'll probably lose his job.

I have a friend who gave up smoking and drinking

15 years ago. He's been screaming as therapy ever since.

Tell me, what's the difference between

antibiotics daily at 12 to stop a sniffle

or a cancer and a tumbler of bourbon at one

to drive away the Fear?

I don't like you, AA. You'd never recommend

the hair of the dog. You want us to slay

the dragon with a noodle. Even St. George had a sword.

Total abstinence is your only creed. You would

have denied me a gulp yesterday when I tried to

assemble my kid's bike with four parts missing.
Then the bedroom cupboard door fell off.
Doesn't everybody need a drink in this world
where everything's breaking down and there's no repairmen?

The Booster Shot

some days the morning eye opener
at home just won't do the trick.
you have to go to a bar.

of the drinks you make yourself, the worst
are full of desperate introspection,
and the best lack all understanding.

the comments by today's barkeep prove my point.
pouring my second double gimlet
in five minutes he said, like sherlock holmes,
"this is for therapeutic reasons, i assume.
i'm a stinger man myself."

then we exchanged some easy bar talk
on the Rams and the races.
two gimlets more, shored up, i left.

"see ya, doc, thanks for the medicine."

arf, said Sandy

roger is a friend of mine. it was his idea
that we train a dog our way. reach out
to pet him, he snaps your hand in two.
offer some gaines or a doggie treat, he
cowers in terror. lift up a folded newspaper,
he licks your hand. say "heel" and he
dashes into the street. old people can
pull his fur, tug his ears; but he will not
let a child touch him. he scratches at the
door to come in and leak against the coffee
table leg. he wags his tail at mailmen,
burglars, and nazi uniforms; snarls at his
owner. he runs away when he is called. sits
up when a stick is thrown. hides his leash,
has to be dragged outdoors for a walk.

we figure: why should a dog be different?

-- Charles Stetler

Long Beach, CA